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Feds recommend money for BART extension

The Federal Transit Administration recommended Monday that Bay Area Rapid Transit expansion into Silicon Valley receive federal funding.

The ruling was necessary before the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority could begin preliminary engineering work on the project that would bring BART service to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara. VTA now seeks \$5 million in federal funds to conduct preliminary engineering work. This request is scheduled to be considered by the U.S. House of Representatives this fall.

"This approval was gained after a thorough and rigorous three-month evaluation by the FTA and is a critical milestone in the BART expansion project," says U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose. "With this approval, we are now eligible for New Starts funding in this year's transportation appropriations bill."

Mr. Honda says securing BART funding is his top transportation priority this congressional session.

VTA has secured 80 percent of the estimated \$3.2 billion cost of extending BART the 16.5 miles from Fremont through San Jose to Santa Clara. That includes Santa Clara County Measure A, passed in 2000, which commits about \$333 million to construct BART, while the state committed to contribute an additional \$725 million.

VTA is competing with 190 other projects across the United States for an estimated \$20 billion in federal dollars expected to be doled out during the next 20 years.

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